

News Release



For Immediate Release

Date: July 3, 2001

Contact: Roy Stearns

Phone No.: 916-654-7538

Email Address: Rstea@parks.ca.gov

‘Ecological Error’ Corrected: Final Wildlife Link Acquired at Coal Canyon

CHINO HILLS STATE PARK – The State Department of Parks and Recreation has acquired the final 32-acre parcel linking Chino Hills State Park to the Cleveland National Forest, State Parks Director Rusty Areias announced today.

The parcel, known as the North Property, is located along Highway 91 East of Yorba Linda, adjacent to an area called Coal Canyon, which was acquired by State Parks in November of last year. The final purchase price for the North Property was \$13.5 million, with the State Department of Parks and Recreation contributing \$10 million. (See fact sheet for funding sources)

“Noted ecologists have called this a landmark acquisition,” said Areias, “and it is. It is being called the most important habitat linkage in California, and perhaps the entire United States, because without it a vital wildlife migration route is cut and ecologists tell us we would begin to see the local extinction of wildlife species.”

The importance of the North Property is that it is the final link in what is the last remaining viable wildlife corridor still in existence between the Puente-Chino Hills area and the Cleveland National Forest. It ties together an area of approximately 50,000 acres to the north of Highway 91, with more than 500,000 acres to the south, providing a vital wildlife corridor that extends from the Whittier Hills to San Diego County.

“This is the correction of an ecological error,” said State Park Ecologist Geary Hund, “because had we not saved this parcel, it would have led to an ecosystem collapse and the local extinction of many animal species. That’s because the Puente-Chino Hills area alone is too small to support many of the species that are there now.

(more)

California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>

“The area,” said Hund, “has to be connected to other areas and without the North property as the connector, we would begin to see species trapped in ‘habitat islands.’ If that were to happen, the cougars would be the first to disappear and the rest of the food chain, the deer and smaller animals, would be next.”

The State Department of Parks and Recreation will now add the North Property to Chino Hills State Park. The 649-acre Coal Canyon property was added last year.

#